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Practical Suggestions

FOR THE GROWING OF CULTIVATED BLUEBERRIES

BY

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GROWERS and NURSERYMEN

~~SOUTH HAVEN, MICHIGAN~~

Covert

Berries marketed as Tru-Blu Brand

Large Blueberry Plantation Covert, Mich.

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CULTIVATED BLUEBERRIES

These blueberry plants are a source of superlatively fine fruit, but also are ornamental shrubs of rare beauty. They may well be used in association with their close relatives, laurel and rhododendron. In pleasant contrast to the rich, evergreen masses of the latter, blueberries give lightness, grace and color.

In spring the dainty new leaves of blueberries with their pinky, bronze tones are very lovely. Even more charming are the carmine-tipped buds and myriads of waxy, white flower bells. The berries, at first green flushed with pink on the sunny side then ripening to a lovely soft blue, are exceedingly beautiful till past midsummer. To no foliage does autumn bring a more glorious and lasting crimson. When the gorgeous leaves drop there remain all winter bright red twigs, knobby with the fat buds enfolding the promise of next spring's flowers.

In choosing the varieties the size of the berry was naturally an important consideration. As much care, however, has been devoted to securing plants of superior vigor, hardiness and productiveness with fruit of superlative flavor, fine aroma and delightful texture.

Flavor varies considerably with locality and season besides being a matter of individual taste. Relative ripening time of the different varieties also varies with locality and season.

Varieties

In order of ripening, Weymouth, Rancocas, Pemberton, Stanley, Atlantic, Jersey, Rubel, Burlington and Dixi, which are at present the leading varieties, with Rancocas, Stanley, Rubel and Jersey the main commercial plantings.

WEYMOUTH is a large, dark berry of fair quality, the earliest.

RANCOCAS productive, upright and vigorous, berries medium light blue and good quality.

PEMBERTON very vigorous and productive, berries large, medium blue, good flavor, has long picking season, worthy of commercial trial.

STANLEY early mid-season, open bush, berries large and very good quality and flavor, has long picking season, one of the best in its season.

ATLANTIC vigorous, productive and excellent flavor, short picking season, worthy of trial as commercial berry.

JERSEY mid-season and later, semi-upright, very vigorous, fruit large and firm, good shipper, fast replacing other commercial varieties in some sections.

RUBEL vigorous, hardy, and productive, berries medium light blue, of good quality, should be allowed to ripen well before picking, excellent shippers.

BURLINGTON slightly later ripening than Rubel, berries medium size and color, excellent flavor.

DIXI one of the newest varieties and a good prospect.

PLANTING BLUEBERRIES

Blueberries should be set in an acid soil with Ph range of 4.0 to 5.1. This is the most important factor of a blueberry site. Type of soil may vary from muck to sand if the Ph is correct. Organic content of the soil is also important. This material may be added to the soil by the use of acid peat.

The moisture content or water table is very important as they grow best when water table can be maintained from 14 to 24 inches below the surface. This may be aided by irrigation very profitably in dry seasons. Also in small plantings it may be found advantageous to use some form of acid mulch, as oak sawdust or leaves, or by adding acid peat to the top soil.

The acidity may be increased by using some form of sulphur, or it may be reduced by the addition of limestone. The advice of your County Agricultural Agent is recommended on this matter.

Irrigation water is also used as a frost preventative during blossom season with good success.

Distance of planting for commercial plantings should be, rows ten feet apart and plants five feet apart in the row. Home gardens may be planted closer together.

Planting time may be either Spring or Fall.

Blueberries are very shallow rooted plants and should be cultivated shallow and often to conserve moisture and to keep the weeds down. A cover crop may be planted as soon as the berries are harvested, such as oats, sudan grass or mixtures. Plants should be kept clean for the control of Mummy Berry Disease.

The use of a complete fertilizer of 8-8-8 or 3-9-18 or 6-12-12, fertilizer made up of acid ingredients, is recommended, according to your type of soil. Some soils may need certain minor elements. It is best to obtain a complete soil analysis.

Blueberry plants need not be pruned very much the first two or three years in the field. The heavier the pruning after that the less berries, the larger the berries, and the higher percentage of early berries, and the better buds for next year's crop.

Pruning may consist of removing dead and broken branches and large clusters of thin, bushy wood that accumulates in older bushes, an occasional old stem that is not productive any longer. Remove branches that tend to bear close to the ground.

Of the insects that work on berries, the Cranberry Fruit Worm and the Blackberry Fruit Fly or Maggot are the most feared. These may be controlled by dusting. Contact your State Entomology Department for control measures.

Stunt Disease causes plants to become dwarfed and foliage small, mottled and cupped, berries small and worthless. All infected plants should be removed and burned. Roguing for this disease should be done at least twice during the growing season.

Mummy Berry is a disease caused by a fungus infection, taking place mostly during blossom period if season is damp. Plowing under all top soil very early is the best control measure, and cultivating shallow frequently.

Berries are picked in small containers, either pint boxes or small pails, graded and marketed either as fresh fruit or to processors. Production and marketing of this beautiful, delicious fruit is increasing rapidly.

It may be used as an ornamental in your shrubbery and enjoyed both Summer and Winter.

SOME BLUEBERRY RECIPES

BLUEBERRY PIE

4 cups Blueberries
1 cup sugar
4 tbsp. flour
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
1 tbsp. lemon juice
1 recipe plain pastry

Mix berries with sugar, flour, salt and lemon juice. Line pie pan with pastry, pour in filling and cover with top crust. Bake in very hot oven (450°) 10 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350° and bake 20 to 30 minutes longer. Makes 1 pie (9-in.).

BLUEBERRY MUFFINS

3 tbsp. butter
 $1\frac{3}{4}$ cups sugar
1 egg
2 cups milk
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
4 cups flour
4 tps. baking powder
2 cups Blueberries

Cream butter and sugar, add beaten egg, then milk alternately with sifted dry ingredients. Add Blueberries last. Bake in greased muffin tins in hot oven (400°) for 20 to 30 minutes. Makes 24 muffins.

BLUEBERRY COTTAGE PUDDING

2 tbsp. butter
 $\frac{3}{8}$ cup sugar
1 egg
1 cup flour
 $1\frac{1}{2}$ tps. baking powder
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
2 cups Blueberries
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup milk

Cream butter and sugar, add beaten egg and mix well. Add flour sifted with baking powder and salt and mix with berries. Add milk and mix well. Bake in a greased loaf-pan 20 minutes, in moderate oven. Serve warm with cream, ice cream, or vanilla sauce.

BLUEBERRIES (CANNED)

Select firm, slightly under-ripe fruit. Wash carefully. Pack cold in sterilized jars. Add light or medium syrup as your taste prefers to within one-half inch of top of jar. Adjust caps. Process in pressure cooker 8 minutes at 5-lb. pressure.

Select firm, slightly under-ripe fruit. Wash carefully. Pack into sterilized jars. Add hot, light or medium syrup. Adjust caps. Process 20 minutes in boiling water bath.

BLUEBERRIES (FROZEN)

Select firm fruit. Pick over, wash, drain well. Pack 1 part by weight of sugar to 4 parts by weight of fruit (1 cup sugar to 6 cups fruit); or in syrup to cover. Seal boxes and quick freeze.

BLUEBERRY JAM

$4\frac{1}{2}$ cups— $2\frac{1}{4}$ lbs.
prepared fruit
7 cups—3 lbs. sugar
1 bottle pectin

To prepare fruit, crush about $1\frac{1}{2}$ quarts fully ripe berries. Add juice of 1 medium lemon and grated rind of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon. Measure sugar and prepared fruit into large kettle, mix well, and bring to a full rolling boil over hot fire. Stir constantly before and while boiling. Boil hard 2 minutes. Remove from fire and stir in pectin. Skim; pour quickly. Paraffin at once. Makes 12 glasses.

FROZEN BLUEBERRY WHIP

1 cup sieved Blueberries
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
2 tbsps. lemon juice
Few grains salt
2 egg whites

Combine Blueberries, sugar, lemon juice and salt. Let stand 10 minutes, or until sugar is dissolved. Beat egg whites stiff, but not dry, fold in berry mixture. Pour into freezing tray of automatic refrigerator; set cold control at point recommended for freezing ice cream. Freeze until slightly firm. Place in chilled bowl. Beat smooth with rotary beater. Return to tray and freeze firm. Reset to normal. Serves four.

Information Available

Michigan Agricultural Experiment Station
Quarterly Bulletin 12 (2) 112-116, 1939

Michigan Agr'l Exp. Station Technical Bulletin 151, 1936

Michigan Agr'l Exp. Station Technical Bulletin 192, 1944

Michigan Agricultural Circular Bulletin 185

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J. R. SPELMAN CO.

SOUTH HAVEN, MICH.